

The Baptist Record

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Published Since 1877

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1980

Volume CIV, Number 45

Baptisms Rise

Statistics Show Baptists In State Reaching More

Churches cooperating in the Mississippi Baptist Convention have experienced what Earl Kelly calls "the first visible evidence that Bold Mission Thrust has caught on."

Bold Mission Thrust is the catchphrase for Southern Baptists to use in carrying the claims of Jesus Christ to the world. Kelly heads the MBC Board. That evidence is the statistical report that shows church program areas all registering increases for the 1979-80 church year (September-August) over 1978-79.

Total membership of the 142 reporting churches is up 7,492 to 620,205 in 1979-80, from 612,713 in 78-79.

Baptisms, which reflects conversions to Christianity, both children and adults, registered an increase of nearly 2,000. The 1979-80 figures are 17,680, up 1,931 from the 15,749 of 78-79.

Sunday School enrollment, which often provides an indication of future growth in membership, is up 10,282

from the 336,607 of 1978-79, to 346,889. Church Training is up in enrollment 2,246 from the 1978-79 figures of 128,515, to 79-80's 130,761.

Church Music is up 3,313 from 1978-79's 89,803 to this year's 91,116.

Besides the church program areas, the church missions organizations registered increases in enrollment. Woman's Missionary Union rose 641 this year from 51,101 to 51,742. And Brotherhood (men and boy's organizations) rose by 2,091 to 25,672 from 23,581.

Directors of the various Mississippi Baptist Convention Board offices which receive the figures and which offer training to churches and associations in these various program and missions areas, offered comments on the reasons for growth when other denominations are suffering losses in membership.

Roy Collum, evangelism department director said the gain in bap-

tisms "is the result of a deepening prayerful concern for unsaved people, a substantial increase in personal wit-

ness training, and better revival preparation."

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"Ye Are The Light Of The World"

Matthew 5:14-16 says "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In this Christmas season, where scented candles abound, let each candle be a reminder of this obligation of each Christian. Whether through a special offering to foreign missions, a cheery greeting, or a gift of time, let your light shine. The staff of the Baptist Record wishes you and yours a loving, shining Christmas. The next issue of the Baptist Record will be dated January 8, 1981.

President Takes Lead In Missions Commitment

By Anne McWilliams

Brooks Wester, pastor of First Church, Hattiesburg, and the new president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, said that the most important issue Mississippi Baptists are facing in the coming year is their continuation of Bold Mission Thrust, and specifically, in connection with this, "our commitment

to our partners-in-missions relationship with California and our newly made commitment to a similar relationship with Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay."

Wester expressed his feeling that the state convention this year was the "finest in spirit" he had ever attended. "The testimonies on witnessing were spiritual," he said, "and unusually inspiring. . . . The speakers were all

good." His opinion of the Clarke-MC merger question was that "a mature spirit was expressed in settling a problem that needed to be settled. The convention did the only wise thing that could be done, in order that Clarke could continue to make a contribution to Christian higher education."

Last month Wester concluded a term as president of the Convention Board. Previously he had been chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board. Also he has served as a trustee of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

In various times when he was chairman of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, and member of the SBC Committee on Resolutions and SBC Executive Committee, he had chances to observe Baptists of other parts of the nation. Yet he says he hasn't seen a lot of important differences between Missis-

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I'd Rather Be Fooled A Hundred Times . . .

By Bob Hastings

Monday, December 24 dawned clear and bright in Tinyburg, turning a new-fallen snow into millions of dazzling diamonds.

Rev. Still Concerned relaxed in his study, now that the holiday pressure was ending. Last night, ushers had brought in extra chairs to seat the overflow crowd for the pageant, "No Room in the Inn." The residents of the nursing home had enjoyed a special party last Friday. And all the food baskets were delivered to needy families on Saturday.

He opened his wallet and fingered the \$20 bill which Mrs. Unexpect pressed in his hand as she left the pageant. He knew she needed the \$20 herself; he also knew her pride would be hurt if he refused it.

A holy quiet seemed to descend on the neighborhood, and even the telephone lay hushed, as if in deference to the magical approach of Christmas Day.

Just then, an old trap of a car drove up in the parking lot. Rev. Concerned could easily hear it, since it had no muffler. Between groans and wheezes, it backfired a couple of times.

The driver, a disheveled youth of about 22, asked Rev. Concerned for help. "My wife's in the back seat, sick and pregnant. We're broke, trying to reach her parents by nightfall. Their family doctor's agreed to deliver the baby without charge. Preacher, we ain't got nothing."

Rev. Concerned offered to take them to the Tinyburg Cafe right then for a hot meal. The ministerial association, thru its fund for transients, had a standing arrangement at the cafe and Bob's D-X Station for meals and gasoline.

"No, preacher, what we need's

cash money," the young man replied. "My wife's so sick she can't hold nothing on her stomach, and I snack in the car to save time. What we're desperate for is green stuff. If you had a little as \$20, we could drive straight through and make it by dark. Otherwise, we'll have to keep stopping, begging for gas money."

Pastor Concerned walked out to the lot and looked in the car where a young woman, gently moaning, lay on the back seat wrapped in an old blanket. It was evident she was pregnant, and he wondered how she'd make it that far.

The treasurer of the ministerial association had already left town, so there was no chance of getting a check from him. So although he realized some ministers are a soft touch, the pastor opened his billfold and shared Mrs. Unexpect's \$20 bill. The youth barely thanked him before jumping in the car and driving off with such a fury that the tires skidded on the new-fallen snow. And as they sped away, the girl pulled out a pillow hidden in her lap, grinned at the preacher, and shouted, "Have a good Christmas, sucker!"

Rev. Concerned didn't know who to be angry with—the couple who had fooled him, or himself for being fooled. "That's what happens when you let yourself get carried away with dramas like 'No Room at the Inn,'" he told himself.

"I guess the skeptics are right when they say Christmas is too sentimental," he continued. "But what's \$20? I'd rather be fooled a hundred times, than to close the Inn just once in the face of a homeless child, whether he's the Son of Man, or the son of a Tinyburg street-walker." (Reprinted from the Illinois Baptist. Used by permission).

FMB Saves Millions By Congress' Action

WASHINGTON—Taking dramatic eleventh hour action, the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives passed and sent to President Carter legislation restoring an income tax exclusion for missionaries and other overseas charitable workers.

The President, who has supported the measure, was expected to sign it quickly.

Approval of the provision, supported by a bi-partisan group of lawmakers, came during an unusual Saturday session with both houses of Congress, Dec. 13. Passage in both the Senate and House was swift and unanimous, yet the ease with which final approval came belied an intensive struggle in the Senate over whether the measure would come to the floor for action.

Senator Robert T. Byrd, (D-W.Va.) Senate Majority Leader, after days of trying, succeeded in calling up the bill containing the tax exclusion provision

under an agreement preventing additional amendments or a role call vote. That crucial parliamentary maneuver (Continued on page 2)

Disciplelife Interpretation Clinics Set

Spiritual growth for youths is the aim of a newly developed series called "Disciplelife" to be used during the Sunday evening Church Training hour in Southern Baptist churches.

The discipleship training series will be explained in full for Mississippi Baptists during interpretation clinics the week of Jan. 26-30, 1981. These interpretation clinics are for pastors, other church staffers and youth leaders.

These eight clinics will take place all across Mississippi, and will be held in conjunction with the "How to Plan a Youth Week" conferences. Each clinic begins at 7 p.m.

The dates and places for the clinics are Jan. 26: First Church, Coldwater, and West Jackson Street Church, Tupelo; Jan. 27: First Church, Greenville, and First Church, West Point; Jan. 28: Easthaven Church, Brookhaven, and Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport; and Jan. 30: Van Winkle Church, Jackson, and Highland Church, Laurel.

Church Training magazine describes "Disciplelife Celebration" which is the youth Church Training hour, as centering in on the small group training experience. This concept was developed by the Sunday School Board and Home Mission Board working in partnership.

Conference To Dig Into Doctrines

The annual Mississippi Baptist Evangelism/Bible Conference will delve deep into Baptist doctrine.

This meeting, Feb. 24 at First Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, will feature doctrine studies in 10 areas with conferees able to attend any two. Plus, two sessions will deal with evangelism.

The doctrine and evangelism studies will be on Feb. 3 from 10:30 a.m.-noon; and will be repeated that day from 3-4:45 p.m.

W. Douglas Hudgins, pastor emeritus of Jackson's First Baptist Church, will speak on the doctrine of angels; Gus Merritt, pastor of Clarke-Venable Baptist Church, Decatur, will speak on Satan; and Hardy Denham, pastor of First Baptist Church, Newton, will speak on demons.

The doctrine of man study will be led by James Yates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Yazoo City; sin by John E. Barnes, Jr., pastor of Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg; and the church by J. Roy McComb, pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia.

The doctrine of future things study will be led by Joe H. Tuten, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson; God by James Hefflin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville; Christ by John G. McCall, pastor of First Baptist (Continued on page 2)

On The Edge Of Christmas

I was frail, so the Lord provided for me a typewriter in an office on the second floor, and I played a billing machine pleasantly in a New Orleans high rise apartment hotel, where I lived on the fourteenth floor and traveled an elevator home from work. I ate well downstairs, and in the lobby was a Christmas tree

of great magnitude, twinkling tender white with plush limbs like angel wings all velocity. Outside, in the warm night, I flowed with shoppers on a bus down Canal Street to scenes of Christmas.

My heart melted as from the rooftop came caroling song, and then the story of Jesus was read from the Bible. But out on the neutral ground, something was wrong! On the pavement, hit by a car they said, a woman lay still, pale, quiet, holy, asleep. In untold grief I pulled onto a bus nearby and rode away.

An old man beside me remarked, "How I wish my son could hear that message about Jesus." "Why can't he?" "He has been brainwashed into a cult, and he is one who mocks our Saviour with unspeakable evil." At home through my picture window, I saw a vast city of lights blinking like stars fallen to the ground. I said, "Jesus, give salvation to the living while they live. God bless the dead." Then reclining by the window sill, I opened a box of chocolates and ate my fill.

—Violet Tractett McComb



Bruce Cherubs Sing Of Baby Jesus

The Cherub Choir of First Church, Bruce, presented a Christmas program, "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus," Sunday night, Dec. 14. The choir is under direction of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Davis.

Ad Hoc Committee Forms SBC-Wide Video Network

By Tim Fields

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A convention-wide video tape network has been formed by ad hoc committee of Southern Baptist Convention executives.

The committee, which has no official convention sanction or authority, is designed to increase the use of video cassettes in Southern Baptist churches and associations, according to Cecil Ray, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and chairman of the committee.

Formation of the cooperative was announced at a meeting of more than 150 executive during the September meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Ray said the new group — the Southern Baptist Video Network — hopes to produce from 200 to 500 video programs during the next three years, as well as to lead 1,000 associations and 10,000 churches to secure video players.

"The video network is a voluntary cooperative between Southern Baptist Convention agencies and Baptist state conventions with the purpose of producing and distributing to churches video programs dealing with teaching, training and communicating," Ray explained. The goal of the network is to make the tapes available on a loan or service fee basis.

The video network idea began during a 1979 meeting of state convention executive secretaries in Anchorage, Alaska, and was followed by an exploration conference at the Baptist Sunday School Board. The ad hoc committee was formed in December 1979 at the request of state executive secretaries.

To finance projects of the network, the committee is calling for Baptist state conventions to contribute nearly

\$1 million during the next three years. Each convention is being asked to allocate the equivalent of \$10 per church each year for three years.

"In return for their investment, each participating convention will receive one copy of every video tape produced by the network," Ray explained. "Baptist state conventions can then personalize, duplicate and distribute the tapes to churches any way they wish," he said.

In addition to the \$1 million which the network hopes to collect, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission has agreed to produce the first 25 thirty-minute tapes for "out-of-pocket expenses."

Jimmy Allen, executive director of the Radio and Television Commission, said this would constitute a savings of nearly \$125,000 in production costs to "clients" of the network and would help produce a large proportion of the 60 tapes projected for 1980-81.

Southern Baptist boards and agen-

cies including the Sunday School Board, Stewardship Commission, Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Annuity Board and the Christian Life Commission have submitted nearly 200 proposed titles for video programs to be produced during the next three years.

Several plans for mass duplication and distribution of the video tapes are being explored by the network.

Possibilities for duplication include the Radio and Television Commission, state conventions who have their own duplicating facilities, and commercial sources. Distribution could be through state convention video distribution centers, Southern Baptist Convention agencies and the Sunday School Board.

In addition to production and distribution of software programs, the video network has made arrangements with the Sunday School Board to provide video hardware at reduced prices to Southern Baptist agencies,

Mississippi Baptists have a part in the tape network's development. The Convention Board's 1981 budget has a \$20,000 item as Mississippi's share in tape production costs for 1981.

Several departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board are producing methods tapes that will be shared with the network.

state conventions, associations and churches.

The discounts made possible by volume purchasing are available regardless of whether a particular agency or state convention participates in the video network system.

Prices for a commercial ½-inch video playback unit and an accompanying color television monitor start at approximately \$1,500. Additional discounts will be given for larger quantities. Pooling of orders at set deadlines during the year could result in additional savings.

Although higher priced ¾-inch units will be available through the Sunday School Board, the video network is encouraging churches to stay with ½-inch commercial VHS playback or recording units with two-hour program formats.

The goal of the video network is to produce the majority of tapes in the ½-inch format although ¾-inch tapes could be made available.

FMB Saves Millions

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saved the bill H.R. 4968 from becoming a "Christmas Tree" to which other tax related amendments could be proposed and debated on the floor.

Passage of the tax exclusion language came only two days before the final deadline for payment of 1979 taxes by employees of overseas charitable organizations. The Internal Revenue Service had twice extended the original deadline for payment anticipating that Congress might reinstate the exclusion.

In the case of the Foreign Mission Board approval means the saving of \$1 million annually. The first payment of nearly \$1 million would have been due Dec. 15. Then another similar payment due June 15, 1981, if Congress had failed to act. But passage of the measure also benefits many other charitable organizations, both church related and secular, which maintain personnel abroad. Estimates of savings to all such groups range as high as \$25 million annually.

In a statement issued Dec. 15, FMB President R. Keith Parks thanked Southern Baptists for their support in urging Congress to pass the tax exclusion language. "Our victory de-

monstrates the value of prayer, teamwork, and persevering to the end," Parks said. "And it shows again that missions is what pulls Southern Baptists together, especially when the chips are down."

Parks paid special tribute to editors of Baptist state newspapers for informing Southern Baptists of the need in supporting the tax measure. "They again have demonstrated the value of their role in communications and their own considerable contribution to God's work," he said.

Crisman Moves To South Carolina

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — Larry Crisman, associate director of public relations for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board in Dallas, has been named director of public relations for the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Crisman will assume duties Jan. 1 as a successor to Thomas J. Brannon, who became director of public relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

World Evangelism Foundation Will Phase Out Next December

DALLAS (BP)—World Evangelism Foundation will phase out its organization by Dec. 31, 1981, because of plans by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to accelerate "partnership evangelism" around the world.

The foundation's trustees voted the action unanimously at its annual meeting in Dallas, Dec. 5. Subsequently, the Foreign Mission Board, at its Dec. 9 meeting, voted to "affirm its plan to provide opportunity for Southern Baptist churches to participate in partner-

ship evangelism," an approach which matches U.S. churches, pastors, and laypersons with their counterparts overseas.

The board expressed appreciation to WEF; agreed to work cooperatively with it during its phase-out period in 1981 in partnership efforts in Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, England and Spain; and noted that the board "will gradually assume financial responsibility for partnership evangelism campaigns."

WEF President W. H. (Dub) Jackson Jr., who resigned as a Southern Baptist missionary in 1969 to form WEF, said the decision was made to avoid duplicating the Foreign Mission Board. "The board is much more able to accomplish the job than we are," Jackson said.

Jackson, 56, who spent 17 years as a missionary to Japan, said the decision to phase out came gradually and without previous planning during a series of conversations with Foreign Mission Board officials.

Ira M. Metts, Minister, Dies

Funeral services for Ira F. Metts, 88, were Dec. 15 from Main Street Baptist Church, Goodman, with burial in Hillcrest Cemetery.

A retired Baptist minister, he died Sunday, Dec. 14, in Durant Hospital after a long illness.

He is survived by his wife, Addie Hall Metts; two sons, James F. Metts and Leonard P. Metts, both of Jackson; a daughter, Rozali Skelton of Goodman; a brother, Dewey M. Metts of Ocean Springs; a sister, Mrs. W. E. Holmes of Pensacola, Fla.; a half-brother, Brooks C. Metts of Jackson, Tenn.; two grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

He had served churches in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi, including Woodland Hills Church and Midway Church in Jackson, and in Durant, Lexington, and Camden. He had served on several committees of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Board staff members who were exploring ways to involve a wider cross section of Southern Baptists in world evangelism.

He told Baptist Press he has informed the Foreign Mission Board's personnel selection department that he and his wife, Doris, are available for reappointment as missionaries after commitments to WEF are completed, "if that's the way the Lord leads." The Jacksons' son-in-law and daughter, Bill and Shirley Karr of Dallas, were appointed missionaries to Japan, where Shirley grew up as a missionary kid, during the board's December meeting.

WEF's approach to partnership evangelism has majored on placing teams of Southern Baptist pastors and laymen in evangelistic crusades and one-to-one witnessing in churches in 30 countries during the past 12 years. Often teams from those countries have conducted reciprocal evangelistic efforts in Southern Baptist churches in the United States.

In a meeting with the Foreign Mission Board's overseas committee, Morris Cobb, a board member from Amarillo, Texas, who has also been active in the Dallas-based WEF, emphasized that WEF came into existence in the beginning because the board did not have a partnership approach.

Cobb also emphasized that WEF did not come to the Foreign Mission Board asking the board to take over its work, but that the board came to WEF asking for input on partnership evangelism.

Statistics Show

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Bryant Cummings, who directs the Sunday School department said he believes the Sunday School growth "came as a result of a new and revitalized concept towards Sunday School growth on the part of leadership and membership in the churches." He added, "I believe there is a fresh desire on the part of many Sunday Schools to elect people within the membership to give time and attention to teaching the Bible once people have been reached."

Kermit King, director of the Church Training department, said that more and more churches are discovering the need for training. "They are rediscovering the excellent quality of the contents of curriculum materials now being produced. They are attracted to the variety in programming with the addition of Equipping Centers along with the tremendous reception of the Survival Kit for New Church Members which is actually being used more with recent church members than for the

Remembering Thirty Jerusalem Christmases

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carols as we stood cupping our ears to hear the church bells clanging in Bethlehem so far away.

After the Six Day War in 1967, Jerusalem was reunified and remains one city today. All Christians have been able to freely celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem's Manger Square and thousands do, including the many choirs which flock to Israel every

Robert L. Lindsey, 63, has spent forty of his years in Jerusalem as a Baptist pastor and a scholar of the New Testament. His ecumenical activities over that time have made him a beloved figure to Jewish, Moslem and Christian citizens of the Holy City.

Walking with a limp from an accident in which he lost a leg rescuing a boy from a minefield in the no-man's-land that divided Jerusalem before 1967, and speaking with the soft traces of an Oklahoma accent, Lindsey tells of his busy life in a modern city holy to three religions.

Ever since he received his Ph.D. in theology and philosophy from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1954, the Baptist pastor has devoted his academic attention to revision of the Gospel of Mark in the Hebrew language and to reassessing the interpretation of the entire Gospel story. At the same time he has nurtured a congregation of Jerusalem Christians, most of whom are Baptists. They worship under his guidance on Narkis Street in new Jerusalem, joined by a considerable number of Christian visitors to Israel.

Christmas to fill the square with the sound of carols.

As the years went by, the Lindsey family welcomed two more little boys and a final, sturdy little girl. Somehow we always had our best times when the six children and an occasional visiting grandparent from overseas sat in the parlor near the lighted Christmas tree and we exchanged gifts.

One by one the children came of age and flew away to the United States for college. Some married there and others came back to Jerusalem to marry or set up housekeeping. Just now our oldest and second boys are here, are married and have several children between them. The "baby" girl, Debbie, lives with us in Jerusalem and draws pretty pictures on olive wood. She is twenty-four.

The church is more bustling now than it was in 1946, so there is a lot of work involved in preparing for Christmas. Last year, a night or two before Christmas, our expanded chapel filled with nearly two hundred people. Afterwards, they wandered joyfully through the streets of West Jerusalem and into the Old City for services in the traditional churches, some not till midnight. Many non-Christian Israelis joined them, for Israel's love music.

About a thousand European and American Christians live in Jerusalem nowadays and there are nearly seven thousand Arab Christians. For Christmas 1980, several thousand visiting Christian tourists will swell the number of Christians at celebrations. It should be exciting.

But I expect the happiest moments for the Lindsey family will be around the Christmas tree in our apartment in Jerusalem as three of our children and their families celebrate with us.

President Takes Lead . . .

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siippi Baptists and the others. "Our commitment to the cause of Christ is the same."

Brooks Wester was born in Elgin, Texas (one of a family of seven children), where his father was the Baptist pastor. "My parents never tried to influence me toward the ministry," he recalls. "I'm in it very definitely because of the call of God." His mother and father dedicated him to God when he was a baby, for God's use, however He wanted to use him. Yet they did not tell their son of this until after he had surrendered to the gospel ministry at age 18. He was converted and baptized

at age 10, in Brady, Tex.

First Church, Hattiesburg, where Wester has been pastor since 1967, has a strong Bible teaching program, and a strong outreach, so that the congregation is growing. Many young families are joining the membership; they have children, so more space is needed. In fact, a new building is being planned now to take care of some of these people and to add office space.

Other pastorates of his were First Church, Brunswick, Ga.; First, Brookhaven, Miss.; and Park Place, Houston, Tex. In 1948 Brunswick, Ga. voted Wester its Outstanding Citizen. Texas Baptists in 1964 elected him vice-president of their general convention. Baylor has utilized his talents as a trustee.

He married Margaret Bentley of Dallas, whom he met while both were

Norman Price Dies At 68



Baptist Foundation Officers

New officers of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation are gathered above immediately following the recent meeting of the foundation. John Dowdle of Columbus, third from left, is president. Bill Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clinton, second from right, is vice-president. Harold Kitchings, right, is executive secretary. E. L. Herring, second from left, from Jackson, is chairman of the Executive Committee. Other Executive Committee members are Grady Doss of Eupora, left, and Charles Lofton of Brookhaven, third from right.



Missions Directors' Officers

The new officers of the Mississippi Conference of Directors of Missions are shown during a meeting of the conference earlier this month. Left to right, they are J. C. Renfro, Rankin Association, chorister; Allen Webb, Jackson Association, vice-president; W. Harold Anderson, Lee Association, president; and Odis Henderson, Bolivar Association, secretary-treasurer.

Evangelism/Bible Conference Will Dig into Baptist Doctrines

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Church, Vicksburg; and scriptures by David R. Grant, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson.

"Awakening Now" is the title of a session on evangelism by John Havlik

Wanna Buy A Dog? — He Bites!

"Juggernaut" Alcoholism Decried In Interfaith Meet On Coast

By Tim Nicholas

Would you keep a dog that bit every 13th houseguest? That was the way one participant related the likelihood of a social drinker becoming an alcoholic during a tri-state conference on the impact of alcohol and other drugs on contemporary life.

The conference last week at Gulfshore was organized by Owen Cooper, of Yazoo City, who engineered a national conference on the same topic last year at Indianapolis.

The Gulfshore meeting attracted about 60 people from several denomi-

nations in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and included advocates of total abstinence and of drinking in moderation.

Jimmy Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Ft. Worth, Tex., a keynote speaker, said the church must provide a substitute for what alcohol does for the drinker. He said alcohol offers instant fellowship, and circumstances that allow one to bear one's soul and express hostility. "All of these things are what are supposed to be the experience to be found in the local Baptist church."

Doyle Smith, a Jackson anesthesiologist, told the group that as a preceptor, he had treated the Baptist preachers for alcoholism. One, he said, traveled extensively, sleeping in a new town most nights and had trouble sleeping. A deacon in a church he visited, gave him some valium which "worked wonders." He grew into a "slow insidious dependency" on the drug.

Then, said Smith, the preacher, while on a plane, intercepted some "free" champagne passed out in flight. "He found his drug of choice," said Smith and the preacher could not handle drinking "because his (body) chemistry had changed."

A workshop speaker, Ed Lilly, who directs the Baptist Rescue Mission in New Orleans, spoke of the church's task of reconciliation with both God and with one's fellow man. "We must provide a healing and redemptive fellowship," said Lilly. He noted that "we get all excited when a wet-dry issue comes up, but we fail to recognize many people are in our community and churches who already have been

affected by the end result of alcohol." In his workshop, he advocated churches allowing such groups as Alcoholics Anonymous to use their facilities. One woman, a Mississippi Baptist, said her church would not allow AA to use the building because "they might smoke."

Lilly enumerated several of the "great myths" of alcoholism. A person will say "the problem is out yonder on skid row." Lilly said only three percent of alcoholics are on skid row. The rest are functioning at various levels of society. The other myth according to Lilly, is "there's not problem with alcohol in my congregation."

On a nationwide basis, of the 100-125 million drinkers, 9%-14 million are alcoholics. In 1977 American industry suffered \$19.64 billion in lost production. There were more than 28,000 auto deaths in 1979 directly attributable to drinking drivers and 800,000 auto accidents in all, which raises everyone's insurance rates. Charles Holmes, staffer at the New Orleans mission, who cited these statistics, said the American Medical Association reported that 50 percent of all fracture cases treated in emergency rooms involve drinking.

And on the problem of feeding a hungry world, where more than 10 million people will starve to death this year, 32

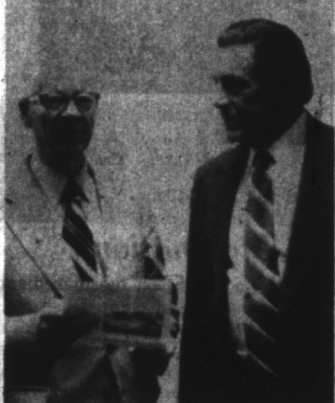
including five or six close family members. Those statistics make it hard to claim that any Baptist church is unaffected by alcoholism.

However, Harold Hughes, former U. S. Senator, and a recovered alcoholic, claimed that "most alcoholics look at the church as the enemy, not as a friend and a place to get help." He added that "if alcohol is a disease, why are we not training doctors, preachers, and nurses to deal with it?" Hughes was instrumental in getting the Hughes Act passed which created a national commission on addiction.

Jimmy Allen took issue with Hughes' premise that the church is not helping. His former pastorate in Texas, First Baptist Church in San Antonio, has a ministry to alcoholics which offers food and spiritual guidance. "The churches do care," claimed Allen, "but don't know what to do."

Allen said Christians have to hold in check this "juggernaut" while trying to uplift its victims. "We need a maximum amount of legal and social restraint on the traffic and have to be concerned enough to act."

He added, "If we wait until we can have a dramatic effect, we may never get started. Everything starts with a single step."



Owen Cooper and Harold Hughes talk about alcohol problems.



Ann Allen of Columbus talks to Jimmy Allen of Fort Worth.

Allen To Appear On ABC Television

FORT WORTH, Texas. (BP)—Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will be featured on ABC-TV's "Directions" program, Sunday, Dec. 28, in a year-end discussion of religion in public life.



At a Thanksgiving Service at Sunrise Baptist Church in Carthage, Mrs. Effie Broadhead presented a box of 70 shirts she made from discarded material by a local shirt factory to Henry Glaze of the Baptist Children's Village. They were different sizes and colors, short sleeve, and long sleeve for the boys at the home. Photo by Davis Beckham. (Picture and story from The Carthaginian)

Young Ministers' Wives Are Invited To Retreat

The tenth annual Young Ministers' Wives Retreat will begin with supper at 5:30 Friday, January 23, and conclude in the early afternoon Saturday, January 24, at Camp Garaywa near Clinton.

The retreat is provided by Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union for ministers' wives who are under 40. The husband may be in any area of ministry: pastoral, music, education, evangelism, music evangelism, recreation, youth. It is complimentary, but reservations are required. These may be made by mailing name, address, telephone number and time of arrival (whether for supper or not) to Young Ministers' Wives Retreat, WMU, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Reservations must be made by mail only. In the event cancellation must be made, either mail or phone is acceptable.

Program highlights this year will include missionary messages by two young first-term missionaries: Libbie Wallace Panter serves with her husband, Danny, who is a general evangelist in Tabligbo, Togo. They have three children. Susan Langston Carlisle and her husband, Jason, also a general evangelist, serve in Florida, Uruguay.

Included in the activities will be a feature on energy conservation, another on finding time for and be-

125 Attend Preaching Meet

Those pictured were among the leaders of a Preaching Conference at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada, Dec. 8-9. Earl Kelly, executive secretary for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, referred to the language problems involved in preaching. "We're going to have to change the language of the Latin of Madison Avenue to the vernacular of the world," said Kelly. "Many of us (who preach) speak a language from the pulpit the people do not speak." He added that the purpose of preaching is to bring "together a needy world and a God who cares about their needs." Bob Hamblin, professor at New Orleans Seminary, and former pastor of Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, offered sermon ideas on Philipians, the Book for the January 1981 Bible Study. He told the 125 registered participants, "there is an incarnation in preaching. The Word of God takes on flesh and makes an application to humanity." He said a key to preaching is to "get with God and find out how God wants to apply that Word to the lives of the people." V. L. Stanfield, also a professor at New Orleans, suggested methods of sermon development. On the three point sermon, he noted that as far as he knew there is no relationship between it and the Trinity. Fred Wood, also on the program, pastor of Eudora Baptist Church, Memphis, spoke on preaching from the Bible and said that he was not bothered by the term "historical critical" method of biblical analysis. It is simply an "analysis against history," said Wood. Commenting on the variety of ideas discussed in seminary, Wood said that seminary is a graduate school and a student should be "mature enough to be exposed to ideas across the board, or else he shouldn't go to seminary." Tom Larrimore, Jackson music evangelist, led the music. Leon Emery, who directs the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries department which sponsors this meeting, now in its second year, said that the high attendance "says to us, they do want to improve their preaching."



Scraps Made Useful By Woman Who Sews, Has Love In Heart

Thanksgiving meant a new shirt for 70 boys at the Baptist Children's Village in Jackson.

The shirts were a gift from Mrs. Effie Broadhead of the Sunrise community who made all of them herself from scraps and rejects thrown out for waste at a local shirt factory.

Mrs. Broadhead gathered up the material which was in various lengths and sometimes partly made shirts that had been rejected for different reasons, and either made the shirts from the beginning or put the patterns together properly.

All of the material is knit, and some of her shirts are long sleeve, some short sleeve. She made different sizes from the different colored material.

During Sunrise Baptist Church Thanksgiving supper and program, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Glaze from the Children's Village came to the church

to accept the shirts, to make a talk, and to thank Mrs. Broadhead personally for her interest and homework.

Mrs. Broadhead, who is 73, makes her home with her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Brown, and helps take care of two boys, works in the garden, sews for the boys, and makes lap robes for people in nursing homes.

Sunrise Church was organized by her father in 1936.

Two Series Of Interest Will Begin In January

The entire Baptist Record staff wishes for all of its 130,602 subscribers a Christmas season filled with the joy that knowing Christ as Savior can bring and a very rewarding New Year.

Two series of interest to Mississippi Baptists will begin in the Baptist Record with the first issue in January. With that issue the Baptist Record will begin presenting commentary on all three series of Sunday School lessons on a full-time basis. Also in that issue there will begin a 13-week doctrinal series by Frank Stagg, who lives in "retirement" in the Diamondhead area of Mississippi but continues to teach on a part-time basis as senior professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary.

The next issue of the Baptist Record will be dated Jan. 8. There will not be an issue for either Dec. 25 or Jan. 1. The Baptist Record's second-class mailing permit calls for 50 issues each year. The issues of the weeks of July 4 and Dec. 25 are skipped, as a matter of course. Next year, however, has 53 Thursdays, the day of our publication; so there must be an additional issue skipped. Jan. 1 was chosen because it was still a part of the holiday season.

With the Jan. 8 issue will begin a full-time commentary on the Bible Book Series of Sunday School lessons. It has been used on an intermittent basis previously. The writer for the period from January through June will be Gordon H. Sansing, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pontotoc.

Other Sunday School lesson commentary writers for the first half of next year will be Tom F. Rayburn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Booneville, for the Uniform Series and James Hefflin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, for the Life and Work Series.

Article VIII (Section 1) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention declares that the Baptist Record shall be the official journal of the convention and

the Convention Board for the publication of Baptist and world religious news, and dissemination of Baptist doctrines, the creation of goodwill toward the denomination, and the promotion of the work of the convention and Convention Board.

Through editorials, devotionals, and articles there has been limited input of a doctrinal nature through the years. The Baptist Record Advisory Committee, which is the convention-elected body directed to advise the editor on content, has felt a need for more of a directed doctrinal emphasis. The committee and the editor chose to ask Stagg for permission to use his series that first appeared in 1964 in Church Training material shortly following the adoption by the Southern Baptist Convention of the Statement of Baptist Faith and Message in 1963. It was published additionally in the Baptist Message, a state Baptist paper for Louisiana. Stagg, a native of Louisiana, had been a pastor in that state as well as being on the faculty of New Orleans Seminary before moving to Southern Seminary.

Scudder Named Emeritus Vice-President

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—C.W. Scudder, vice president for business and development, has been named emeritus vice president by trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Trustees, in a special called meeting, acknowledged Scudder's retirement, and elected Roger W. Hall of Jefferson City, Mo., as his replacement. Hall, 37, will have the title of vice president for business affairs.

Hall's election will allow Scudder to retire from his present position effective Jan. 31, 1981. However, he will continue to serve beyond retirement as a consultant in planning and development.

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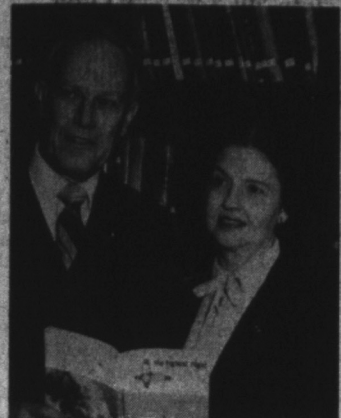
Dear Southern Baptists,
This holiday season is a time of celebration of Christ's birth and a time of looking to the future.
During 1981, your Sunday School Board will celebrate its ninetieth anniversary. For ninety years the Sunday School Board has served churches of all sizes in their task of winning people to God through Jesus Christ.
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Names In The News



Bill and Nell Rittenhouse of Tupelo were among the guests of President Jimmy Carter at the White House for a reception commemorating National Bible Week recently. They were among guests who have been involved in the distribution of Bibles. Rittenhouse, pastor of Tupelo's First Baptist Church, is on the board of High Flight, a worldwide non-denominational evangelical organization that has placed marked New Testaments in Arab countries. "The Highest Flight," edition is carried on flights of Royal Jordanian Airlines on a regular basis.



Larry Haggard, right, was licensed to the gospel ministry on Nov. 2 by West Side Church, Macon, Noxubee County. Mike Duff, left, pastor, presented the license. Haggard, who plans to enroll at Clarke College next year, is the son of Mrs. Margaret Haggard and the late J. W. Haggard of Macon. He is married to the former Sue Ann Featherston of Brooksville. They have a son, Richard, 7.



HEBRON CHURCH, SMITHDALE, has awarded Sunday School perfect attendance pins to five persons: front row, MITCH MOORE, two years, and RICHARD REID, one year; second row: C. H. DICKERSON, Sunday School director, JUNIOR WELLS, 10 years; DOSHA PARKER, one year; and DENNIE PARKER, oldest member of the church, one year.



DREW CHURCH of Drew has ordained five new deacons. Pictured with WILBUR B. WEBB, pastor, are: (l-r) WARREN GRIFFIN, WADE FLEMING, A. C. TIDMORE, JR., C. L. TURNER and STEVE SHURDEN.



First Southern Baptist Church of Pearlington (Gulf Coast) recently began the church year by ordaining two new deacons, James Foxworth left and Chandler Reynolds, right. Pastor Steve Jackson, center, states that October also saw the formation of a Church Training, WMU, and Brotherhood in this church.

Staff Changes

Huey Pinson has resigned the pastorate of Emmanuel Church, Jackson, where he had served three years. Previous pastorates were in Hattiesburg and in Smith and Simpson counties. Pinson is available for supply or pastorate. His address is 208 Rowland Ave., Jackson, Miss. 39209 (phone 922-5412).

Day Wynn has joined the staff of Natchez, First Church, as minister of education, going from Oak Forest Church, Jackson where he served for six years.

Wynn is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, Tenn. and Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. He is married to the former Bobbie Winstead of Brookhaven.

Arthur Guy Gray has resigned the pastorate of Immanuel Church of Vicksburg, after seven years there. The church has constructed a new building, and recently dedicated it. Gray is retiring, and he and Mrs. Gray will move to their own home in Pearl. The church will honor them with a reception on Sunday night, Dec. 21.

Albert McMullen is new pastor of First Baptist Church, Stonewall. He moved from Evergreen Baptist

Doyle Baird will retire Dec. 31 after 24 years at the Sunday School Board. Baird went to the board in 1956 as director of administration in the student department. He has been in student work since 1939. In his current position as consultant, church ministries to students, he deals with strengthening the relationship between the local church and Baptist Student Union.

Mary Ann Jones of Mobile, Ala., is available for Christmas concerts, other concerts, retreats, conferences, banquets, or revivals/special music. She may be addressed at "His" Ministry, 4304 Nadzab Drive, Mobile, Ala. 36609 (phone 205/666-6606).



W. B. Abel, left, has been named "Man of the Year" by the Louisville-Winston County Chamber of Commerce. During a Nov. 20 banquet, David McCool, right, presented him with the award. The 85-year-old pastor has been a preacher since 1915, or 65 years. During these years he has baptized at least 1,000 people. Retired, he has been "interim" pastor of Union Ridge Church for ten years. Previously he was pastor at Noxapater for 11 years; First Collins, 12 years; Poplar Springs Drive, Meridian, 19 years; and Rolling Fork four years. His graduation from New Orleans Seminary was in 1924. He studied at Clarke College and Mississippi College. He and Mrs. Abel, the former Carrie Spencer of Glenn Allen, have one daughter (who lives in Houston, Tex.) and two grandchildren.

Emmanuel, Greenville, ordained Robert Canoy to the gospel ministry, Nov. 9. He will be attending Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., in January.

Curtis A. Burge, who recently resigned the pastorate of First Church, Greenwood, is available for supply preaching, interim pastorate, revivals, banquets, or Bible studies. He may be addressed at Box 258, Clinton, Miss. 39056 (phone 924-1038). Burge is a graduate of Gulfport High School, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous pastorates included First Church, Union, Miss., and churches in North Carolina and Georgia.

Elim Church, Rt. 3, Quitman, on Nov. 2 licensed Ronnie Cooper to preach the gospel. Cooper, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cooper, of Quitman is available for supply preaching. He is married to the former Rena Harris from Rocky Point, N.C. David Manasco, pastor at Elim, presented the license and a love offering from the church. Acteens and GAs presented a love gift to Mrs. Cooper.



James Lester Reeves and Mabel Elaine Wigley Reeves will celebrate 50 years of marriage during festivities Dec. 28 at Paul Truitt Memorial Church, Pearl, where he was pastor 24 years and is now pastor emeritus. (They were married at First Baptist Church, Kosciusko, on Dec. 23, 1930.)

Their son, Elvin, Director of Training for the Mobile Homes Industries, Tallahassee, Fla., will deliver the morning message at Paul Truitt on Dec. 28. Their son-in-law, Barry Landrum, husband of their daughter Charlotte and pastor of First Church, Bossier City, La., will preach at 7 p.m. He is a former minister of music and youth at the church. Also the Reeves' other daughter, Bebe, director of nursing at Woman's Hospital, Flowood, and her husband, W. R. Richardson, will be present. A reception for the Reeves will be held in the Fellowship Center of Reeves Annex at the Paul Truitt Church from 2:30 until 4:30 p.m. The public is invited. Special music will be provided by Jeff Hardy and Connie Sims.

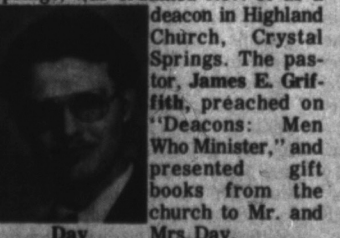
The Reeves are from Possum Neck community. After they went to college at Clarke and Millsaps, they returned to Possum Neck where he was principal and teacher at Possum Neck High School. Also he attended New Orleans Seminary. He was ordained in 1942 by the Gautier Church, which he organized and served as pastor. Later he was pastor at Richland before going to Paul Truitt. He retired in July, 1976. The Reeves live at Robin Hood Lake Estates, Brandon.



Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Gatlin were honored on Appreciation Day Oct. 26 at Old Oak Grove Church, Union County. A member of that church since 1935, he has served as deacon, and in many other ways. She joined Old Oak Grove in 1947 and has been a Sunday School teacher, Church Training leader, and Bible School worker. She taught school 37 years. They have often opened their home to visiting pastors and evangelists, and to church activities through the years.

Speeches and songs, flowers and gifts and a dinner were presented. The Gatlins' children, Nancy Gatlin of Memphis, and Mr. and Mrs. Sammy Huffstatter of Myrtle, were present.

Charles Martin Day, son of Mr. and Mrs. William T. Day of Crystal Springs, was ordained Nov. 30 as a deacon in Highland Church, Crystal Springs. The pastor, James E. Griffith, preached on "Deacons: Men Who Minister," and presented gift books from the church to Mr. and Mrs. Day.



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Just For The Record



Wade Church honored Hazel Waltman, the church pianist, Nov. 9. A love offering was given to her, as well as a painting by Joni Eareckson. Telegrams, mailgrams, and letters from former pastors and other musicians who had previously served with her were presented. A cake had been decorated with several verses from Psalms. Pictured are Mrs. Waltman, John Odom, minister of music, left, and H. A. Wilks, Jr., pastor, right.

She came to the Wade community 20 years ago as an elementary school teacher, and at Wade Church volunteered to be pianist. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Leon Prestidge of Magnolia. During student days at William Carey, she was summer missionary on the West Coast.

A few years ago, when she had serious eye problems and recovery was slow, the people in the church prayed for her; the Lord answered their prayers and she continued to play the piano. Mrs. Waltman and her husband, Walter Lee, have a son Floyd and a daughter Ramona.



Border Springs Church, Caledonia, Lowndes County celebrated homecoming Nov. 23. Brooks Lindsey, in photo at left with his family (a former pastor at Border Springs), delivered the morning message. Buddy and Carol Smith, in photo at right with W. E. Prout, gave a concert in the afternoon. The Smiths are from Central Methodist Church, Columbus. Prout, professor at Mississippi University for Women, delivered the afternoon message. Michael Carroll is the pastor.



A 15-passenger Dodge van has been given to Fairhaven Baptist Church, Olive Branch, by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Nichols, church members. They are pictured with Dillard K. Lykins, pastor, and Tracy Jagers, music and youth director.

Victory Church near Bassfield in Jeff Davis County held a dedication service on Nov. 30, following a remodeling program which included brick-ing, adding of Sunday School rooms, building of baptistry, central air installation, and placement of stained glass windows. The church was dedicated following the morning service and a message by pastor Joe Lofton. Dinner was served on the grounds. The afternoon service included special singing and messages by former pastors.



Ronnie Lusher, music director at Hollywood Church, Sledge, was honored recently, when he marked two years of service at the church. He was given a money tree, and his wife Helen was given a corsage made of \$2 bills.

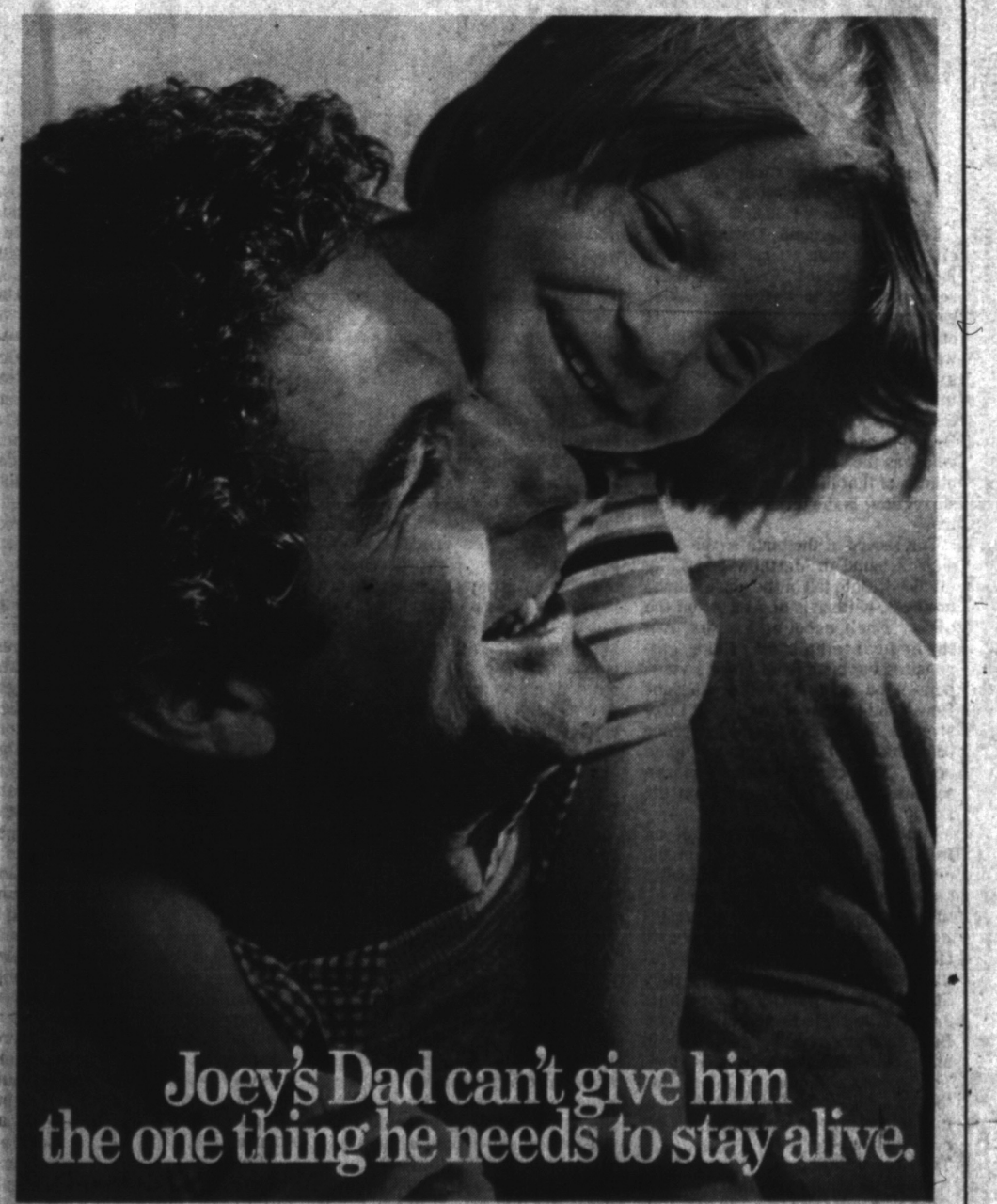
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There are thousands of children and adults whose only chance for a full, normal life is a donated kidney. Their odds for a suitable match improve every time someone signs and carries a donor card.

To be an organ donor is a decision you should make for yourself. What would you do if Joey were your child?

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SCRAPBOOK



God's Double Blessings

One bird would have been enough for Christmas. But then, that's just like God to bless abundantly. He's sending us these two beautiful little chubby birds. His double blessings of real joy and cheer at this season. As we celebrate the birth of His Son.

The little birds seem to say, "We're your friends! We've come to sing a song for you, 'Chick-a-dee-dee!' Because that's the way real friends are. They stand by us to lend a helping hand in time of need. Or say a word of encouragement when we are feeling low.

Sometimes our earthly friends will let us down. But if we trust God's Son, the Friend above all friends, He'll be our Friend from day to day along life's way. In church we like to sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" And in His Word we find, He'll never leave nor forsake us.

At this Christmas season when we see birds in a tree, Let's think of God's double blessings: His Son and a Tree!

—Ruby Singley

Merry Christmas!

Let joy of hearts arise
In jubilation,
And praise rise to the skies
In exultation
That Jesus Christ is born!

Let seeking souls find peace
In salvation,
And kindred tongues release
By exclamation
That a Saviour has come!

Let every man on earth
This season
Proclaim the day of Christ's birth
With reason
That the Prince of Peace has come!
—Sarah Pearson Peugh

Pray for MK

John William Whitten, son of Indy and Charles Whitten, missionaries to the Canary Islands, will celebrate his birthday Dec. 24. He is a student at Mississippi College.

A Child's Prayer

Dear Lord,
I've been thinking
And it seems
Most people have forgotten
What Christmas means.
So help us to remember
On this Christmas Day
That Christmas is really
Jesus' birthday.

—Jimmy Martin, Pastor
Green's Creek, Petal

More Than a Season

Light the candles, hang the holly wreath,
Decorate the fir tree, lay your gifts beneath.
Bake fruit cakes, ice cookies, spicy and sweet,
Garland doorways, add red ribbon bows.
Gather yupon berries—cut a late rose.
See the wonder in a child's face,
Bright as tinsel, shimmering like lace.
Sing the carols in the winter cold night
While stars sparkle the sky with softest light.

Ring the church bells, hear their musical sound,
Celebrate with joy in every town.
Just remember Christmas is more than a season,
Long ago the angel proclaimed the reason—
Let us praise with song our Saviour's birth,
For He was sent by God to save all earth.

—Eunice Barnes

Baptists In Poland Continue To Build

WARSAW—Baptists in Poland report continuing progress at numerous construction sites.

At Krowica Holodowska, a village about two kilometers from the Poland-USSR frontier, a new house of worship was recently completed. The 40 members, who had for a long period met in private homes, did most of the work. The building, with a seating capacity of 100, was financed locally and with Baptist Union aid.

In Bialystok, the Baptist congregation opened a home for the aged early this autumn. Fifty persons live in the new facility, which stands next to the church building. Siegfried Kerstan, a member of the European Baptist Federation executive and General Secretary of the Baptist Union (BEFG) in the Federal Republic of Germany, represented the larger Baptist community at the opening.

On November 16, the church at Bielsk-Podlaski entered their new 150-seat worship centre. This congregation, numbering about 80 members, was begun sixty years ago.

The local congregation, the Baptist Union of Poland, American Baptist Churches, and the Slavic Baptist Union of the U.S.A. and Canada, provided gifts for the building project.

At Gdansk, Elblag, Chelm, Ketrzyn, and Katowice, other church buildings are under construction or approved.

Pinecrest Cantata

Pinecrest Church, near Florence, will present a cantata, "Christmas, the Birth of a King," on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. The cantata will be conducted by Mrs. Joe Royalty. A reception will follow.

A New Christmas Tradition

By Gwen Keys Hitt,
Minister of Music
Big Level, Wiggins

Christmas, the fifth season of the year, refreshes the soul and heightens the senses. This holiday causes memories to flood in of other years and far away friends. Christmas is above all a time of celebration, and our family loves to celebrate. During this annual festival our family rejoices in every way we can conceive. We delight in reviving customs hundreds of years old and in creating our own ceremonies that may one day become a tradition in our home.

We enjoy inviting our neighborhood children over to make gingerbread houses. When the sticky, sweet confections are finished we proceed to carol up and down our street. Our musical repertoire is extremely limited, since 2 and 3 year olds do not have many Christmases past on which to draw.

The music of Christmas is a treasure box we open only once a year. The brilliance of the sounds washes our spirits with a feeling that is both vibrant and gentle. The songs of Christmas enlarge our appreciation for the season and our vocabulary. At what other time do we use terms like "magi" and "wassail"?

Christmas extends more than our vocabulary. It urges us to open every pore of our beings and absorb a myriad of sights, sounds, and feelings. The feelings are the most stimulating and intoxicating. People drop their facade of complacency and allow more elite human qualities to emerge.

From the first day of advent we are preparing ourselves for the rebirth of the spirit of Christmas. We use visible objects to remind us of invisible feelings. Since the early days of civilization, pictures, symbols, and objects have been used to communicate meaningful experiences.

The commemoration of Christ's birth used symbols even before Constantine I, Emperor of Rome, in 336 decreed the feast to be on December 25. With each anniversary our family seeks to add something significantly symbolic to our Christmas collection.

The first nativity scene was used in 1224 in Greccio, Italy when St. Francis of Assisi constructed a manger and tied it to an ox and an ass and assembled the townspeople to pray. Our own creche, a 16-piece ceramic set, was laboriously painted by my husband, our son Oliver, then 5, and me. Its placement each year enables our children an opportunity to "see" the story of that first Christmas. We even delegate the wise men and their camels to the far corner of the display to denote their long travel in order to honor the God child.

The Christmas tree came to us from the Black Forest Tribes of Germany.

In the 1600's they began the indoor use of evergreens to celebrate the winter solstice. The tree is still the center of attraction in many homes.

Realizing the educational and esthetic value of symbols, our family set out to create a tree using only the symbols of Christ and of the Christian faith. We wanted this tree to remind us of this greatest of God's gifts to mankind.

We ordered a series of four books from the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Va. where the Chrismon tree originated in 1957. Frances Kippes Spencer, the designer of that first tree, says that the term Chrismon is a combination of the words Christ and monogram. Thus, a Chrismon is a monogram of Christ. All Chrismons are combinations of white and gold. White refers to purity and perfection and gold refers to majesty and glory.

Mrs. Spencer's creations were designed originally to be used on a large tree in a church setting. She had had many years of experience as a semi-professional in making decorations. Our family had a short six weeks until Christmas, little experience, and two young sons as helpers. We opted to simplify our Chrismons by using less

complicated shapes cut from white felt, stitched and softly stuffed. We trimmed these with a variety of gold materials. Most of our designs are approximately 4 1/2 inches by 4 1/2 inches.

We enjoyed rummaging through jewelry boxes for butterflies and crosses and in toy boxes for small sheep and a tiny baby for our manger. Pins in appropriate shapes were attached to small stuffed and trimmed circles of felt and "voila"—a Chrismon. We made "story balls" using styrofoam balls, straight pins and gold trims. These miniature scenes can be used to depict the parables of Jesus. We included sea shells and sand dollars in our collection. Small boxes were wrapped as gifts to represent the gifts of the kings to the baby.

Our tree was intended to be used only at our home, but our excitement and enthusiasm was contagious and before the season was over our tree had been dismantled and reassembled for five different groups.

Even our 3-year-old Carter recognized the triangles, crosses, doves, stars, and fish. Eight-year-old Oliver was an adept as his father or I in giving the explanations of the Chrismons.

Devotional

What Happens At Christmas?

by John E. Barnes, Jr., Pastor, Main Street, Hattiesburg
Matthew 2:1-15

Perhaps at no other time during the year do we have as many different expressions of emotions and feelings as we do at Christmas. We have the expression of generosity seen in many ways. Since it is the celebration of the birth of Christ, we have every conceivable reaction to Christ. It is a time of festivity. Merchants enjoy a good profit from business. Stores experience rushing throngs of people. Worshippers go to church. Families get together.

It is amazing the various reactions and happenings that take place at Christmas. It has always been this way. At the first Christmas we find the same range of emotions, the same joys, hardships and conflicts. Observe the reactions of Herod and the Wise Men and see in their attitude toward Christmas some of the things that do happen to people during this season of the year (Matthew 2:2-3).

I. We may miss the spirit of Christmas (Matthew 2:2-3). Herod and the people of Jerusalem missed the spirit of Christmas because the Bible says they were troubled. Many are troubled today because, like Herod, they are not following Christ.

II. We may miss the point of Christmas. Herod missed the point. Instead of rejoicing because the Messiah had come, he was suspicious. He ordered the slaughter of little babies and caused grief to the people. Many today will have heavy hearts because somebody missed the point.

III. We may find the joy of giving. This was true of the wise men, the first Christian givers. In the way these first Christian givers brought their gifts is a lesson for all of us today. Notice that these wise men prepared their offering: protected their offering; presented their offering to Christ: provided for the need of the Christ child with their offering.

IV. We may find Christ this Christmas. The Wise Men did. We do not know how many days, weeks, or months they spent searching for Christ. At the end of their journey they found the Savior. I pray that we will all find Jesus this Christmas, and follow Him.

Uniform Lesson

God Sends the Savior

By Jack Glaze, Chairman,
Division of Religion, MC
Matthew 1:18-2:23

Lesson Background: During the excitement of man's first successful journey to the moon, President Nixon remarked that it was the greatest week in the history of the world since creation. However, there are those who differ with that evaluation. The greatest week in history took place many years ago in a small remote town in Palestine. There, in Bethlehem of Judea, a child was born, who was the savior of the world. The climax of that life (crucifixion and resurrection) is the turning point in history.

The record of the birth of the Messiah is found in Matthew and Luke (1:26-38). Both tell of the virgin birth; however, neither is dependent on the other. Each account has its own theological emphasis. Luke emphasizes the birth from Mary's viewpoint. God would give Mary a son! How could this be (Luke 1:34)? Luke stresses the divine power and grace (cf. Luke 1:37), and this "good news." Man cannot produce his own salvation; salvation comes from the Lord.

When Matthew wrote his gospel (ca. 85-90 A.D.), speculations had arisen with regard to the nature of Jesus, as well as to his birth. Opposition to "the way" sought to discredit Christ as being "illegitimate" on one hand, or by denying the incarnation on the other. Matthew simply affirms that Jesus was conceived without a human father, and makes no distinction between his "two natures." He was what he professed to be.

II. The Faith of Joseph (1:19-20, 24-25). A review of the marriage customs of the day will help understand the text. The terms "espoused" (v. 18), "put her away" or divorce (v. 19), and "wife" (v. 20) are used. The normal Jewish marriage procedure comprised three steps: First, there was an engagement, frequently arranged by the family or a "matchmaker." Since this was often done without the couple knowing each other, there was a second step, or betrothal when the couple ratified, or accepted the arrangement. At this point the girl could break the engagement; however, once accepted it lasted for one year and was binding. During that year the couple was known as man and wife, although they did not live together. They were considered

The angel addressed him as the "son of David." Joseph was of the legal messianic lineage, the house of David, so emphasis was placed again on the fulfillment motif; although not physically the son of Joseph, Jesus was shown to be of the descent of David through his "legal father."

Joseph exhibited a tremendous faith. Mary, awed by her selection, accepted the word of the angel, and knew the reality of the conception. Joseph accepted the testimony, and in faith took his virgin bride as his wife and became the "legal father" of her son. To the miracles of the virgin's conception, and God becoming man, we can add the miracle of Joseph's belief: he believed in God and Mary's integrity.

Joseph married Mary (v. 24), and the text assumes natural family sexual relations following the birth of Jesus (v. 25). The brothers and sisters of Jesus (cf. Matt. 13:55f) apparently were the children of Joseph and Mary. The dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary arose in a later age and has no supporting Biblical evidence.

III. The Name of the Child (Matt. 1:21-23; 2:4). In Biblical times, a name was more significant than today. It was more than a label; it was a statement of identity.

Life and Work Lesson

Savior and Lord

By Bobby Perry,
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While we are studying the Gospel of Luke, it seems appropriate at this holiday season that we revert back to chapter 2 which records the account of the birth of Jesus. In an earlier lesson, we studied Jesus' virgin conception. It would be a good use of our time to look back at some of this as an introduction to this lesson.

Luke goes to some considerable effort to place Jesus' birth in a definite historical setting. This kind of detail serves to remind us that it is not simply a beautiful story with no particular historical value. The account had meaning then just as it does now. The virgin birth, along with Jesus' death and resurrection, are pillars upon which the gospel stands.

I. The Background
The birth of our Savior took place in Bethlehem of Judea just as the prophets had foretold. It happened prior to the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C. Jesus' birth is usually dated in 6 or 5 B.C.

It appears that six months elapsed between Luke 1:80 and 2:1. Matthew 1:18-25 relates the crisis faced by Mary

The Roman government conducted the census in an orderly fashion, the head of each family journeying to the town where his family records were kept. Consequently, Joseph left Nazareth, a Galilean village, and journeyed to Bethlehem, a Judean village. David had been born in Bethlehem some 1,000 years prior to this census. Therefore, Joseph, of Davidic lineage, returned with Mary to the home of his ancestor. Although it was not required by law that a wife accompany her husband at the time of the census, Luke indicates that Mary's pregnancy was full term. Had Joseph neglected her and left her in Nazareth, the townspeople may well have ridiculed her at the birth of the child because all would know the brevity of her marriage. That Luke still refers to Mary as Joseph's "espoused wife" is also noteworthy.

III. The Birth (2:7,8)
In these two verses in the original text, Luke told the story of Jesus' birth in one sentence! He did not tell how long Mary and Joseph had spent in Bethlehem before the birth. It may have been some considerable time. The nature of the place of the birth is

that the birth of Christ came to the place of prominence it now holds in the hearts of Christians. The predominant celebration time in the early church was Easter.

IV. The Announcement (2:8-14)
The first announcement of the birth came to the shepherds. They were despised by the orthodox good people of the day. But these shepherds were in all likelihood very special shepherds. It is most likely that they were in charge of the flocks from which the temple offerings were chosen.

An angel, a divine messenger, appeared to the group, and the divine and radiant glory became visible to them. For the third time in the gospel, the command, "Stop fearing," is spoken by an angel (1:13,30). The simple command was further explained by the angel upon the basis that the fear was to be eliminated because of the presence of joy. The shepherds had feared "a greater fear," but the messenger brought "a great joy." This joy is to be all inclusive, its origin based in the birth of the Savior. The Jews had longed for a king such as David had been, and now the divine messenger

